

Report On City Library Is Made By Citizens Group

To: The Members of the Bartlesville City Commission.

The members of the citizens' committee appointed in February for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not there is subversive literature in the Bartlesville Public Library, wish to make a further report to the Mayor and the City Commissioners upon the subject of subversive literature.

The members of this committee have pointed out to the Library Board, certain magazines present in the racks of the public library, against which official citations have been made.

In order to learn whether or not the Bartlesville library was on a par with other libraries in neighboring cities, the members of this committee have visited libraries in six other cities, namely, Coffeyville and Independence, Kas; Ponca City, Sapulpa, Tulsa and Dewey, Oklahoma.

This report will cover the handling of subversive literature, and the general manner of operating libraries in the cities visited by the citizens' committee members.

The Bartlesville Library Board furnished this committee with a list of periodicals now in the library, and of the books purchased during 1949. Since the book list was without the names of authors, the members of the committee, have not as yet had time for making any appraisal of the book list.

The periodical list has been studied, and compared with the lists of periodicals in other libraries. Several periodicals, now in the Bartlesville library, we believe are subversive in character and are aimed at the destruction of the traditional American system of life and government. The purpose of these periodicals is to replace the present republican form of government, with one of radical socialism. We shall discuss these periodicals specifically as follows:

1. SOVIET RUSSIA TODAY.

The Committee on Un-American Activities of the United States House of Representatives has placed three official citations against this magazine. It is distributed by the Communist, Progressive Book Shop in Boston, Mass. (Massachusetts House Committee on Un-American Activities, Report 1938, pp 281 and 517). The cost of the magazine is 15 cents a copy, and the usual method of distribution is through gift subscriptions by Communists or Communist sympathizers in the community in which the gift subscription is received. We believe that the Library Board should be asked to make an investigation to determine who was the donor of this gift to our public

library. Members of the citizens' committee found that none of the six libraries visited had copies of this magazine. All of the librarians questioned said that the magazine had come at various time to their libraries, but that it had been destroyed.

The three official citations listed by the Committee on Un-American Activities U.S. House of Representatives are as follows:

(1) Cited as a Communist front (Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Report March 29, 1944; PP 167; also cited in Report, June 25, 1942 PP 21.)

(2) Among the "more important" Communist-front organizations "for the sole purpose of carrying on propaganda on behalf of the Soviet Union." (California Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, 1948, pp 169.)

(3) A magazine published by Friends of the Soviet Union and distributed by the Communists' Progressive Book Shop in Boston, Mass. The articles and pictures in this magazine seek to show the great benefits and advantages enjoyed by Russian workers, stressing the theme that Russia is the only successful nation in the world today. (Massachusetts House Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, 1938, pp 281 and 517.)

If there still remains any doubt as to the character of this publication, this quotation from the December 1949 issue is offered:

"the war-mongers are becoming more and more infuriated. With every day that passes the program of the main opponent of the peace (referring to the U.S.) becomes more obvious.

"This program proposes the creation, by means of violence and new wars, of a world American empire which, in scale, is to surpass all the world empires of conquerors that ever existed in history. It is nothing more or less than a matter of converting the whole world into a colony of the American imperialists, or reducing sovereign peoples to the position of slaves." (pp 7).

This is only a sample of the 32 pages of literature offered monthly by Soviet Russia Today, available to the public in Bartlesville, through the public library.

2. NEGRO DIGEST:

There is an official citation against the Negro Digest by the Committee on Un-American Activities, United States House of Representatives, as follows: "Among the publications which the committee found to be 'Communist initiated and controlled, or so strongly influenced as to be in the Stalin solar

system" (California Committee on Un-American Activities, Report 1948, pp 225.)

3. THE NATION:

There is ample evidence that The Nation, lends its support to Communist causes and vends the wares of the Communist party in its advertising columns. It is not only peddles the prattle of the Communists, but offers its advertising space for such subjects as sexology and homosexuality. (See the Nation, Feb. 18, 1950, pp 165). ("The Sexual Aspects of Anti-Semitism", "Sex Penal Laws in the Soviet Union" "Minor Sex Deviations and Marital Adjustment", "The Psychology of Feminine Sex Experience", "Homosexuality and Oscar Wilde". These topics were discussed in a recent issue of "The International Journal of Sexology", a quarterly journal published in India. The above quotation is from an advertisement appearing in The Nation.)

Not only the advertisers, but also the book reviewers appearing in The Nation recommend to their readers the literature of homosexuals. (On Page 520 of the Nation, Nov. 26, 1949 under the heading of Books and the Arts, we find Ernest Jones recommending a revival of the works of Ronald Firbank whose "writing is reminiscent of the Wilde of 'Dorian Grey.'" Mr. Jones speaks further of "The exquisite and frivolous dream world of his (Firbank's) fiction, with its international elite, and rococo palaces", and of "A Nirvana in which, like Negroes in Paris in the twenties, homosexuals are the ultimate chic..." In the same article the writer adds that Firbank was "old-fashioned in his toying with the ceremonial of Rome", and that he had an "aesthetic interest in evil, of for no other purpose (than) to add color to life.")

To further establish the character of The Nation, let us refer again to the official report of the Committee on Un-American Activities, U. S. House of Representatives, PP143 "For the guidance of the American people in detecting Communist-front organizations, we present the following criteria:....

"7. Does the organization's official publication reflect the line of the Communist Party, publish articles by Pro-Communists, advertise Communist activities, or those of other front organizations...?"

A perusal of the Nation will afford an affirmative answer to this question. In the Feb. 18 issue of The Nation is an article by Carey McWilliams, against whom there are literally scores of citations by the Un-American activities committee. The Nation (Nov. 19, 1949) on p. 495 advertises the Monthly Review as follows: "Whether you like it or not Socialism is here to stay. It is fast becoming the way of life for nearly half the population of the earth. That it will spread further is as sure as

tomorrow's sunrise... Without an understanding of socialism, the world of the 20th century is incomprehensible. To help achieve that understanding is the purpose of the Monthly Review." With the subscription for this socialist periodical is the offer of a free book selected by the Book Find Club. There is an official citation against the Book Find Club report of the Committee on Un-American Activities, U.S. House of Representatives, pp 22: "Book Find Club. 1. Cited as a Communist Front. (California Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, 1948, p. 392.)

Again in the Nov. 19, 1949 issue of the Nation we find this advertisement, p. 496: "Books of all kinds from the U.S.S.R., just arrived... 1950 subscriptions open for all Soviet newspapers and magazines. Four Continent Book Corp...."

The Four Continent Book Corp. is cited by the Un-American Activities Committee report p. 43 as follows: "Four Continent Book Corp. 1. Cited as a Communist publishing house located at 253 Fifth Avenue, New York City. (California Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, 1938, p. 154.)

The Nation is now available at the Bartlesville Public Library.

4. THE NEW REPUBLIC:

This is another publication offering the views of the pro-Communist press, along with advertisements of erotic literature and atheist books.

On Dec. 26, 1949 p. 22 the New Republic published this advertisement: "Masterpieces of Erotic Literature Joseph McCabe's New Study of the outstanding works of sensuality in ancient, medieval and modern times. (So far as we know, this is the first book ever devoted to the library of forbidden literature in the form of the listing of the authors and their book titles, accompanied by authoritative comments. It is both a discussion on an unusual, fascinating subject and something of a directory of the main works of erotic literature....")

On P. 23 of the same issue is this advertisement:

"Poetica Erotica: 770 pages, rare, curious, amatory verse! Unusual Volume! Unexpurgated! ... Again on the same page, another sample of New Republic advertising is this "Atheist Books, 32 page catalogue free. Truth Seeker Co."

Proof that The New Republic is not averse to the dissemination of the Communist line is this advertisement appearing in the New Republic, April 3, 1950 p. 22. "Are your ears bent by propaganda? Read 'In Fact' the weekly newsletter edited by George Seldes..."

Here is what the Un-American Activities committee has to say about "In Fact."

1. Cited as a Communist front whose president and editor is George Seldes. (Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, March 29, 1944, p. 48.)

2. A 'Communist newsletter' written and published by George Seldes. (California Committee on Un-American Activities, Report 1948 p. 148.)

3. Cited as a Communist front. (Pennsylvania Commonwealth Counsel before the reviewing board of the Philadelphia County Board of Assistance January 1942.)

Further evidence of the character of the New Republic is found in the issue of March 27, p. 23: "Debate Sensation! Is Russia a Socialist Community?" "Yes" - Earl Browder, former general secretary of the Communist party. "No" - Max Shachtman, Chairman, Independent Socialist League....

The above citations we believe are sufficient to warrant the removal of Soviet Russia Today, Negro Digest, The Nation and The New Republic from the list of literature offered to the public in Bartlesville. This is no incursion upon the right of any individual citizen, or group of citizens to subscribe to and read these publications.

The members of the citizens' committee found that none of the six libraries visited had Soviet Russia Today or The Negro Digest. Two of them had The Nation and three of them had the New Republic.

Thus it is within the province of the library board to decide whether this brand of literature shall continue to be financed and distributed to the public at the expense of the Bartlesville taxpayers. There are available various official citations, which the members of the citizens committee found in other libraries, for the guidance of librarians in discerning subversive trends in literature. It is the suggestion of the citizens' committee that the citations be studied by the librarian and the members of the library board.

After visiting six other libraries, the members of the citizens' committee believe that in order to conduct the functions of the library the library board should meet at least once a month.

These citizens are of the opinion that the presentation of contrasting points of view on controversial subjects does not require the surrender of our libraries to fifth column invasion. The freedom of the press has never been interpreted to tolerate the printing of counterfeit money. Counterfeit literature, designed to defame and destroy the heritage of American freedom, should be exposed instead of tolerated.

The inspection of other libraries has been the means of bringing out methods which might be used to improve the Bartlesville Library without raising the library budget, which is indeed small by comparison with other cities.

One city (Sapulpa) which operates on a smaller budget than the Bartlesville library features most impressively, the memory shelf. An interested citizen recently gave the library a complete interior decoration job as his gift to the library. One librarian keeps a scrap book of the news stories about the library and another one publishes annually a pamphlet reporting the years' activities. Encyclopaedia year books were found in all libraries (save one) and children's magazines were available in all of the libraries visited.

Citizens committee
M. Warren, chairman
Henryetta B. Wills,
Secretary

Library Board Makes Its Report To Commissioners

TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF BARTLESVILLE, OKLAHOMA:

In accordance with the request of the Board of Commissioners, made at the meeting of the Board of Commissioners with the Board of Directors of the Bartlesville Public Library on March 6, 1950, that an appraisal of the contents of the City Library and a report on the general operation of the Library, be made by the Library Board, the following report is submitted:

The premise upon which the Board's appraisal of the Library's contents proceeded may be summarized in the language of a portion of the Library Bill of Rights, adopted by the Council of the American Library Association on June 18, 1948:

"1. As a responsibility of library service, books and other reading matter selected should be chosen for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all the people of the community. In no case should any book be excluded because of the race or nationality, or the political or religious views of the writer.

"2. There should be the fullest practicable provision of material presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times, international, national, and local; and books or other reading matter of sound factual authority should not be proscribed or removed from library shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval."

It should be clearly understood that the Board's determination that any publication is suitable for inclusion in the City Library does not imply approval or advocacy of the views expressed in the book or periodical in question, either by the Board, or by its individual members. The Board believes that a policy of selection which would confine the Library's contents to material consonant with the opinions of the Board or any of its members, or of any other citizen or group of citizens in the community, would be subversive of the basic principles which differentiate the constitutional government of the United States from the governments of authoritarian states.

Statements have been made to the Library Board by interested citizens to the effect that the Department of Justice or the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or both, maintain lists of communistic and suspect periodicals. Appended hereto is a photostatic copy of letter dated March 23, 1950, from Mr. James

M. McInerney, Assistant Attorney General of the United States, in response to the Board's request for such list, or information concerning it, in which Mr. McInerney states that the Department of Justice has promulgated no lists of periodicals, and that the Department has not in any other way attempted to make any declaration as to whether any periodicals circulating freely in the United States and through the United States mails are considered by it to be subversive. The Library Board has made several requests by letter to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, both at its Oklahoma City and Washington offices, for information concerning a list allegedly compiled by that agency, but has received no written reply to its inquiries. On Thursday, April 20, 1950, Mr. Earl Cullon, FBI agent, with headquarters at Oklahoma City, called on the President of this Board at his office in Bartlesville in this connection, and stated to the President that there is no FBI list of communistic or subversive periodicals. At the President's request, this statement was repeated by Mr. Cullon to the Bartlesville City Manager. The Board has in its files a letter from Mrs. Lucy Ann Babcock of the Oklahoma Library Commission, in which she states that in a telephone con-

versation with her on March 9, 1950, a representative of the FBI at its Oklahoma City office stated to her that the FBI maintains no list of communist or subversive periodicals. The Library Board has secured from the Superintendent of Documents of the United States, a copy of a publication issued December 18, 1948, by the Committee on Un-American Activities of the United States House of Representatives, under the chairmanship of J. Parnell Thomas, entitled "Citations by Official Government Agencies and Organizations of Publications Found to be Communist or Communist Front", listing publications found by various state and national legislative and investigating committees to be subversive, and it may be that this list is the one to which reference has been made in the statements to the Board.

It is the Library Board's opinion, based upon its careful appraisal of the periodicals currently received at the City Library, that the Periodical Section reflects a balanced list of reputable publications, and that it contains no periodicals which may properly be termed subversive. There are appended hereto excerpts from the eighth

edition of "Periodicals for Small and Medium Sized Libraries", published by the American Library Association, consisting of that organization's evaluation of each of the periodicals now received at the Library.

Specific complaint has been made to the Board with respect to three publications: "The Nation", "The New Republic", and "Soviet Russia Today". All three of these periodicals are contained in the Tulsa and Oklahoma City libraries. Appended hereto are photostatic copies of letter dated March 9, 1950, from Mr. James E. Gourley, Librarian of the Tulsa Public Library, and letter dated April 21, 1950, from Mr. Clarence S. Paine, Director of the Oklahoma City Public Libraries, so stating.

It is the Board's judgment that "The Nation" and "The New Republic" should be retained on the Bartlesville Library's subscription list. Their retention, with other publications on the current list, is essential to effect that balance of differing viewpoints on controversial subjects which should characterize a good library. Both publications are contained in the public libraries of other cities in this area. It may be noted that neither publication is cited in the list released by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, the only "suspect" list which the Board has been able to locate.

The magazine "Soviet Russia Today" is sent without charge through the United States mails to public and school libraries, and has never appeared on the City Library's subscription list. The Board's examination of this publication indicates that it is of little value from the standpoints of interest and information, and that its retention cannot therefore be justified in view of the space limitations under which the library is operating.

The City Library contains some 25,000 volumes. It has therefore not been possible, since March 6, 1950, for the Board to evaluate all books on the shelves. The Board has, however, appraised the contents of the Political, Economic and Social sections of the Library's catalog. It is the Board's opinion, based upon such appraisal, that the volumes contained in these sections reflect selection on the basis of interest, information and enlightenment, and effect to the fullest practicable extent balance as between conflicting viewpoints.

The Board's investigation of the general operation of the City Library discloses that its facilities are available to all citizens of the community. "Story hours" are held for both white and Negro children, which are now, and have always been,

conducted on a segregated basis. Neither the City Librarian, nor any member of her staff, encourages the reading of any particular publication or type of publication through suggestions to the Library patrons, the advisory services of the staff being limited to assistance requested. The staff enforces, to the fullest extent possible, the Library rule which forbids the marking or annotating of any publication which is the property of the Library, either by patrons or by members of the staff.

The City Library's effectiveness is limited both by inadequate funds and inadequate space. For the fiscal year 1949-1950, the total sum of \$8,665.00 was allocated for the operation of the Library, which total is budgeted as follows: salaries, \$5,890.00; audit, \$50.00; telephone and office supplies, \$125.00; book repairs and supplies, \$200.00; books, periodicals and newspapers, \$1,800.00; janitor services, \$600.00. Additional space for stacks and storage is urgently required, and the Board hereby renews its request for allocation of such space as may be or become available in the Civic Center building.

The suggestion has been made to the Board that an adult research section be established in the City Library. After careful consideration, the Board has concluded that this proposal should not be adopted. It is most doubtful that any criteria could be established for the inclusion of reading matter in such a section that would be either satisfactory, or capable of administration. The existence of such a section might well invite constant pressures for the inclusion therein of an ever-increasing number of books and periodicals which discuss, from any point of view, controversial topics pertaining to politics, sociology, religion, race relations, or morals. Restrictions of this nature would, in the opinion of the Board, tend to exaggerate in the minds of young persons the attractiveness of unorthodox viewpoints.

The Board believes that an explanation should be made to the Board of Commissioners concerning an incident which has occurred since the last meeting of the Board with the Commissioners. At the close of the March 6 meeting, the Board directed that the Library's files of the three periodicals which had been specifically placed in locked storage until such time as a careful appraisal complained of be segregated and thereof could be made by the Board. Access to the locked storage place in which these files were placed was gained without the knowledge or consent of the Board or the Library staff, and a picture was made of these files and of two

books which were not segregated at the direction of the Board and which the Board has since been unable to locate. This picture was published in the March 9 edition of the Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise, and in the March 10 edition of the Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman. The Board regrets the incident, and disclaims responsibility therefor.

The Board wishes to reiterate its desire to receive the suggestions and advice of the citizens of the community concerning the administration of the City Library, which will be received and carefully considered when presented at regular meetings of the Board. Lists of books and publications currently acquired for the Library will continue to be furnished to the local newspapers for publication, and will be kept on file at the Library for the convenience of patrons. In the interest of providing a forum for comments with respect to the Library's contents, the Board has established at the City Library a bulletin board upon which signed comments and criticisms of books and periodicals on the Library's shelves will be posted.

Respectfully submitted,
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF

BARTLESVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
RUSSELL W. DAVIS, President
OLGA A. BEECHER, Member
GEORGE N. CADE, Member
DARLENE ANDERSON ES-SARY, Member
EFFIE H. FREIBURGER, Member
RICHARD KANE, Member

Tulsa Public Library
Tulsa, Okla.
Office of the Librarian
March 9th, 1950

Mr. R. W. Davis
P.O. Box 370
Bartlesville, Okl.

Dear Mr. Davis:
Mrs. Freiburger of your library bore was in yesterday and asked that I write you. She wished me to specifically state that we have not made any attempt at censorship by removing "Soviet Republic Today," "The Nation," nor the "New Republic".

These publications are on our shelves and will remain there as long as I am in charge. It is true that we do not keep a permanent file of "Soviet Republic Today."

I had hoped to be able to send you a copy of the "Library Bill of Rights," but have been unable to locate one without having it copied. I believe your Librarian could find a copy in library literature.

With all good wishes, I am
Sincerely yours,
JAMES E. GOURLEY,
Librarian

Department of Justice
Washington, D.C.
March 23, 1950

Mr. Russell W. Davis
1542 S. Dewey
Bartlesville, Okla.

Dear Mr. Davis:
This will acknowledge your letter of March 15th, 1950, to former Attorney General Clark, regarding certain periodicals which it has been alleged have been placed on some sort of a suspected list.

The only lists promulgated by this Department consist of those organizations which have been designated by the Attorney General pursuant to Executive Order No. 9835 relating to the loyalty of government employees. No periodicals appear on these lists nor has this Department in any other way attempted to make any declaration as to whether any periodicals circulating freely in the United States and through the United States mails are considered by it to be subversive.

Respectfully,
For the Attorney General
JAMES M. MCINERNEY
Assistant Attorney General

Wright Branch
2101 Exchange Avenue
Dunbar Branch
613 N.E. 4th St.

Oklahoma City Libraries
Carnegie Library
Third and Robinson
Oklahoma City 2, Oklahoma
Office of the Director

April 21st, 1950
Mr. Russell W. Davis, Chairman
Board of Directors
Bartlesville Public Library
Bartlesville, Oklahoma

Dear Mr. Davis:
In reply to your request of this date, as do most public, college, and university libraries in the country, we do receive and preserve the files of the following magazines, and have done so since dates indicated:
The Nation since July, 1905.
The New Republic since November, 1915.

Sincerely,
CLARENCE S. PAINE
Director